

**From the Stacks**  
**By Julie Orf**  
**Dunklin County Library**

While many individuals view books as simple entertainment, for others, stories and songs are like lifelong friends that provide comfort and joy. Readers often form deep, personal connections with the characters they encounter. The literary giants the world lost in 2025 should be recognized because their work will continue to inspire future generations.

Celebrated for his eccentric characters and outlandish plotlines, bestselling American author Tom Robbins passed away in February at the age of 92. Often described as a cornerstone of the counter-culture movement, Robbins was a master of the serio-comic style. His writing proved that laughter can be the best medicine, blending the psychedelic with the deeply philosophical. Fans and readers alike will remember him for iconic works such as *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* and *Jitterbug Perfume*, novels that challenged conventions and celebrated the whimsical side of the human experience.

Before achieving international acclaim, English author and journalist Frederick Forsyth reportedly turned to novel writing out of financial necessity. That career shift led to the creation of legendary thrillers such as *The Day of the Jackal* and *The Odessa File*, which garnered worldwide recognition and cemented his status as a master of the genre. By the time of his passing on June 19, 2025, Forsyth had completed 18 novels, characterized by his meticulous research and journalistic precision. His impact on popular culture was significant, with five of his major works being adapted for both film and television.

Before embarking on his career as a celebrated author, Joseph Wambaugh spent 14 years serving with the Los Angeles Police Department. This firsthand experience profoundly shaped his writing, allowing him to bring an authentic, gritty realism to both his fiction and non-fiction works. His mastery of the genre earned him three Edgar Awards and the prestigious title of Grand Master from the Mystery Writers of America. Wambaugh is perhaps best known for *The Onion Field*, a masterpiece of the true-crime genre, and his novel *The New Centurions* (often associated with the television series *Police Story*). Beyond his books, he was a prolific screenwriter and dedicated educator who taught the craft of screenwriting to new generations. Wambaugh passed away on February 28, 2025, at the age of 88.

The author of more than 30 novels, Sophie Kinsella was best known for her "Shopaholic" book series, many of which landed on several bestsellers list, and in 2009 got the big-screen treatment with the film "Confessions of a Shopaholic." Sophie Kinsella's novels served as a definitive gateway into adult romantic comedies for a

generation of readers. Her prose masterfully blended humor with heart, proving that stories about women could be simultaneously silly, smart, and thoughtful. Despite being pigeonholed by the "chick lit" label of the 1990s, Kinsella and her loyal following steadfastly championed her three-dimensional characters, women who embraced both their intellect and their love of shopping without apology. Kinsella, whose real name was Madeleine Wickham, died of brain cancer in December 2025.

With over 200 romance and thriller novels on the bestseller lists from 1975, Fern Michaels left a few books in the publishing queue when she passed away at the age of 92 in November 2025. She began writing romance novels when her husband told her to get a job as their fifth child started kindergarten. She soon left that husband as her writing career rocketed to success. Her career would span five decades and produce 150 million copies in print, according to Kensington Publishing. Her books have been translated into 20 languages.